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SAUDI ARABIA | IN FOCUS

A WEEKLY PUBLICATION OF THE INFORMATION OFFICE OF
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August 4, 2009

SAUDI ARABIA-U.S.

Saudi Foreign Minister holds talks with U.S. Secretary of State

Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Saud Al-Faisal held bilateral talks with U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton at the State Department in Washington July 31. Speaking at a joint press briefing, the two officials praised the strong relationship between Saudi Arabia and the United States, saying that they looked forward to a continued partnership on key issues, such as Iran's nuclear program, counter-terrorism and anti-extremism efforts, and the global economy.

Prince Saud emphasized the Kingdom's commitment to moving forward with the Middle East peace process. "A bold and historic step is required to end this conflict and divert the resources of the region from war and destruction to peace and development," he said. Calling for a "comprehensive approach" that lays out concrete goals and addresses final status issues, Prince Saud stated: "The whole world knows what a settlement should look like – withdrawal from all the occupied territories, including Jerusalem, a just settlement for the refugees, and an equitable settlement of issues such as water and security."

Prince Saud expressed appreciation for the opportunity to have a "frank, honest and open" discussion with Secretary Clinton, and said their coordinated efforts to achieve peace in the Middle East has "reflected the maturity of this relationship" between the two countries. He spoke to the historic U.S.-Saudi relationship, saying: "Our two nations have been friends and allies for over seven decades. We have seen the coming and breaking of many storms. Over time, our relationship has grown stronger, broader, and deeper."

During her remarks, Secretary Clinton reiterated the need for the Kingdom to take a leadership role facilitating peace negotiations between the Palestinians and Israelis. "Saudi Arabia's continued leadership is absolutely vital to achieve a comprehensive and lasting peace," she said. She also touted King Abdullah's domestic reforms, specifically the naming of a woman to the position of Deputy Minister of Girls Education.

U.S., OIC forge partnership to eradicate Polio

The U.S. and the Jeddah-based Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) have joined together in an effort to establish and support a global initiative to eradicate Polio. A U.S. delegation, comprised of representatives from the U.S. Embassy in Saudi Arabia, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the U.S.

Department of Health and Human Services, and USAID, met with IOC officials at the organization's headquarters in Jeddah on July 26. The two sides discussed strategies for supporting the Polio eradication initiative announced by President Barack Obama during his address to the Muslim world in Cairo on June 4. According to an OIC press release, the U.S. and the OIC agreed to continue coordinating their efforts in specified areas, such as advocacy, fund-raising and technical support.

Embassy hosts luncheon for Saudi GLOBE students and teachers

A luncheon was hosted at the Saudi Embassy in Washington on July 28 in honor of Saudi students and teachers participating in Global Learning and Observations to Benefit the Environment (GLOBE). The visiting group was received by Saudi Cultural Attaché Dr. Mohammed Al-Eissa on behalf of Ambassador Adel A. Al-Jubeir. Funded by NASA and the NSF and supported by the U.S. State Department, GLOBE encourages student-teacher collaborative research in the field of Earth Science, while promoting multiculturalism.

U.S. official praises Saudi national dialogue initiative

Deputy Education Minister Faisal bin Moammar received in his office at the King Abdulaziz Center for National Dialogue in Riyadh on July 28 U.S. Charge d'Affaires to Saudi Arabia Richard Erdman. Mr. Erdman was briefed on the Center's achievements and its current activities aimed at promoting a culture of dialogue between the various segments of Saudi society. Erdman praised the efforts of the Center and stressed the benefits of learning from the Saudi experience. He also commended King Abdullah for transforming a successful domestic dialogue initiative into an international phenomenon. Erdman pointed specifically to the King's sponsorship last year of inter-religious dialogue conferences in Madrid and New York.



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